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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 653rd MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 26 September 2000, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. OUEDRAOGO

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS OF STATES PARTIES (agenda item 4) (continued)

Initial report of Tajikistan (CRC/C/28/Add.14; CRC/C/Q/TAJ/1)

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Sharapova and Mr. Rajabov (Tajikistan) took places at the Committee table.

2. Ms. SHARAPOVA (Tajikistan) said that the Republic of Tajikistan recognized the inalienability of all human rights and endeavoured to ensure that they were respected. The Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan devoted a chapter to fundamental rights and freedoms, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments. Constitutional norms gave direct effect to those rights and the State was the guarantor of their implementation. It was the State party's intention to improve its legal machinery to ensure that civil and political rights and human rights in general, were respected.

3. Tajikistan had signed a number of international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. In addition, the President had signed the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women at the recently-held Millennium Summit of the United Nations.

4. Human rights had been seriously trampled during the civil war, but since the re-establishment of peace, the presidential elections and the institution of a new parliament, the State party was committed to doing everything possible to respect its international obligations, especially those relating to respect for human rights. The provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child had been incorporated into national legislation, and mothers and children were afforded special protection pursuant to article 34 of the Constitution of Tajikistan and various other laws and codes.

5. Since the signing of the agreement on the establishment of peace and national reconciliation, the situation had improved somewhat and the State party had been engaged in efforts to alleviate poverty and its effects, especially on women and children. A Government commission on juvenile affairs had been created which, in cooperation with other Governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), would protect the rights of children and help combat juvenile delinquency and prevent situations where children would be left unsupervised. A commission on juvenile affairs of the local council attached to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and an inspectorate for children's affairs had been established to protect the rights and interests of children, thanks to the assistance received from the United Nations and its specialized agencies, international and inter-governmental organizations and international and national NGOs. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) had been particularly

instrumental in improving the situation of children in the country, and in February 2000 the Government and UNICEF had signed an agreement, covering the period 2000-2004, to increase protection for children under the Convention.

6. The Government was grateful for the assistance it had received but there was still much room for improvement. In the current post-conflict context, it was difficult to ensure full protection of people's rights, in particular social and economic rights, especially those of children. Most families had to struggle for daily survival as the hardships of life in the country pervaded all aspects of daily life. Social services had been reduced, primarily affecting the most vulnerable members of the society. Public health had deteriorated because of a lack of medicines, and women and children in particular were threatened with a number of diseases such as anaemia and diseases resulting from iodine deficiency. Consequently, the infant mortality rate remained high, most of the deaths caused by respiratory and diarrhoeal diseases and perinatal complications, in addition to a high proportion of children with stunted growth and low birth weights. Poor nutrition hampered physical as well as mental development and smaller health budget allocations only served to exacerbate the problem.

7. In the field of education, low pay and lack of job opportunities had led to a large exodus of teachers from the profession. School attendance had fallen because children were forced to work to help support their families, often doing difficult jobs. In any event, the quality of education would not improve until more adequate financing was available. Poverty had left many children homeless and had led to a rise in juvenile delinquency and higher school drop-out rates. Orphans and street children were two other groups in need of urgent attention, many street children having been left fatherless on account of the war. In addition, a large number of young people suffered from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and the expanded drug trade had increased the number of intravenous drug users. As women had to work to support their families, they were unable to pursue their own education or spend sufficient time with their children.

8. Despite those problems, the Government was doing its best to improve the situation by implementing the Convention, and the changes that had already been made would speed up the improvement process. She noted, however, that it was impossible for the State party to solve all its problems on its own, hence the need for increased international cooperation.

9. The CHAIRPERSON invited members of the Committee to ask questions relating to general measures of implementation and to the definition of the child.

10. Mr. RABAH welcomed the delegation's high-level composition, which was indicative of the State party's serious intention to implement the Convention. The Committee was aware of the State party's small size, multi-ethnic composition and newly-gained independence, and of the many changes that had taken place in education and other fields of relevance to the Convention.

11. He would like to know which actors had been involved in the report's preparation, whether the Convention was widely disseminated, especially in schools, and whether coordination existed between Government ministries and NGOs in different fields, especially women's and children's rights. He also wondered whether a mechanism existed for receiving complaints of children's rights violations.

12. Mr. FULCI asked whether the Convention's provisions had been automatically incorporated into national legislation or whether it was given effect through specific legislation. He wondered whether there was a UNICEF office in Dushanbe and what its role was, as countries with economies in transition often received help from UNICEF in preparing their reports.

13. He would welcome information about coordination in implementing the Convention. Were there plans to re-establish the system of local government child protection officers and would those officers act as ombudsmen, receiving and investigating complaints of child rights violations? He would also like to know whether there was an active network of NGOs in Tajikistan and whether they assisted in promoting the rights of the child.

14. Ms. EL GUINDI inquired about the structure and leadership of the National Council for Children, its coordination with Government ministries and its relationship with civil society.

15. Ms. MOKHUANE, citing an NGO alternative report concerning the inconsistent participation of civil society in children's affairs asked whether civil society had been involved in the preparation of the report. She would like to know whether an independent complaints mechanism existed for violations of children's rights. What impact did the shortage of resources have on education and other areas? Had a study been conducted in that regard, and which other areas besides education had been affected? She would also like to know whether studies had been conducted on the sustainability of programmes, especially health programmes, and how disaggregated data on children under 18 were collected?

16. Mr. DOEK said reports had indicated that efforts to raise funds to address the problem of starvation in Tajikistan had met with limited success, which suggested some neglect on the part of the international community. The country's situation had been worsened by an influx of Afghan refugees fleeing the Taliban, which added to the State party's problems with its own internally displaced populations, former combatants and returnees and the high levels of violence which persisted even after the civil war.

17. He asked about the role of the interministerial working group, coordinated by the Centre for Strategic Research, in the implementation of the Convention and requested additional information on the human rights education programmes introduced by presidential decree in 1999. Might the high registration fees demanded of NGOs be a deterrent to their active participation? Finally, would be interested in finding out how the drought had affected children and whether all the country's water reserves had been depleted.

18. Ms. RILANTONO said she would like to know more about the social and economic conditions affecting children. Education and health were purportedly free; if that was the case, she would like to know why, in certain cases, fees were charged. What progress had the Government made in establishing local child protection services?

19. Ms. KARP inquired how many children there were in Tajikistan, aged 18 and younger. More information on the statistical infrastructure would be useful, in particular, how the data system organized relevant data on the lives of children and their children under the Convention, and how it handled such matters as the juvenile detention system, child victims of abuse and

mistreatment, displaced children, refugees and other children from vulnerable groups. Were those statistics disaggregated, and if so, how? Did the Government envisage designing a system that would assist it in developing programmes for children?

20. She was aware that the Convention existed in Russian; had it also been translated into Tajik? It would be useful to know what information about the Convention was available for children and adults. Finally, she would appreciate descriptions of any child-related bills under consideration, including their status and the timeframe for their approval by the legislature.

21. Ms. TIGERSTEDT-TÄHTELÄ said she would like to know the mandate of the presidential human rights body responsible for ensuring the fulfilment of the constitutional human rights guarantee. It would be useful to know how it functioned, whether it cooperated with other bodies, whether it worked with NGOs and whether it had achieved any significant results.

22. She would be interested to know whether the country's economy was continuing to grow, in particular whether the market economy had strengthened. It would also be useful to know whether the Government endeavoured to coordinate economic and social policies, and whether it applied a human rights or child rights perspective to policy development, in particular with a view to using economic growth to enhance allocations for children. Was the Government able to raise taxes specifically for social programmes benefiting children?

23. Ms. SHARAPOVA (Tajikistan) said that the report under review was the country's first report to a treaty body, and that the Government had no experience in preparing such reports. An alternative report had, in fact, been prepared by NGOs. A group of governmental advisers kept abreast of the activities of NGOs. A commission had been established, under the auspices of the Prime Minister, made up of six deputy ministers who dealt with specific issues: each one worked with a related NGO. Although there was a partially State-run office for women in development, there was no separate governmental structure to deal with women's affairs.

24. Nor was there, in fact, any national children's council: that was an error. The Tajikistan Government would have to consider the establishment of a coordinating body to focus specifically on the problems of children and adolescents. Although no such body existed, many ministries had special commissions that dealt with matters affecting children and young people. A committee made up of members of the Government and the legislature addressed the problems of children at the central and local levels.

25. Mr. RAJABOV (Tajikistan) said that information about the Convention was disseminated through the mass media. A special children's newspaper, supported by UNICEF, regularly featured articles concerning the rights of the child, and sponsored a competition for children regarding the provisions of the Convention. The Convention had indeed been translated into Tajik.

26. No particular body existed to receive complaints from children. However, Tajik law gave all governmental bodies the power to receive complaints and communications from the public, including children, which it was their responsibility to consider and resolve. If any

governmental body found that a violation had occurred, it forwarded the dossier to the appropriate ministry, and, where applicable, proceedings were instituted against the perpetrator. In addition, many NGOs were devoted to the matter of citizen's complaints.

27. All international legal instruments ratified by Tajikistan automatically became part of the legal regime, and all governmental bodies were obliged to abide by their provisions. Consequently, the basic provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child were reflected in Tajik law.

28. There was a UNICEF office in Tajikistan, and UNICEF provided assistance and support for the protection of children's rights. A new cooperation agreement had recently been signed between UNICEF and Tajikistan to cover the period from 2000 to 2004, which set out the main areas of joint action.

29. The question whether to establish an ombudsman's office was under discussion in Tajikistan. In 1999, the Government had organized an international round table on the development of human rights mechanisms, which had been attended by ombudsmen from European and Central Asian States. The need for such an institution was gradually being understood by the Tajik population.

30. There were more than 600 active NGOs in Tajikistan, many of them working in close cooperation with governmental offices; some focused on children's issues.

31. Ms. SHARAPOVA said that the matter of what body should defend children's rights in Tajikistan was defined by law. Although the children's inspectorates had been discontinued, commissions on children's affairs had been created both at the central and local levels. Their mandates, however, called for review, as they currently dealt mostly with the status of children who were unable to continue their studies for economic or social reasons, and children who had been abandoned by their parents or whose parents had been stripped of their parental rights. Either the mandates of those commissions should be broadened, or another body should be established to handle issues that arose under the Convention.

32. There was an office that concentrated on the collection of statistics, regarding, for example, the number of children in school with mental or physical disabilities and the number of children in Government-run homes or boarding schools. The information was not entirely reliable, however, as certain indicators were flawed. For instance, the fees for birth registration amounted to about US$ 5, and, since the minimum wage in Tajikistan was only US$ 0.50, many persons neglected to register their newborns. It was estimated that between 12 and 20 per cent of births were unregistered. To cite another example, the unemployment rate of 3 per cent represented only those persons who were officially registered as unemployed. A child-related database had been created with assistance from UNICEF, which broke down children into two groups, ages 14 and under and ages 15 to 17. Another database covered the question of crimes committed by children, and calculated the number of children and adolescents who were admitted to children's centres. According to recent data, there were 6.1 million inhabitants of Tajikistan, half of whom were children.

33. Although the law provided that education and health should be free, many hospitals charged fees for particular services and medicines, and private schools and specialized secondary schools demanded fees. Although the fee-supported schools were well-equipped and had full teaching staffs, many of the Government-supported schools, especially in rural areas, lacked sufficient chairs and desks.

34. The Government had begun considering a programme for extensive health care reform, but such a programme could not be implemented by it alone, and would require the support of donors and international organizations. The programme would concentrate on increasing the number of hospital beds and improving out-patient care, with emphasis on the provision of primary care near patients' homes. It would also define which patients should be entitled to care free of charge and which could afford to pay for services.

35. A Government working group comprising representatives of various ministries and the World Bank had been working on a project to combat poverty, which had been implemented in two pilot districts in rural areas. Every month, the programme provided schoolchildren from needy families with a very small amount of cash, under US$ 1, to help them purchase school supplies or clothing.

36. Unfortunately, resources were still very limited, as the country' s factories were not operating at full potential, and some had yet to be refurbished. In addition, there was a serious problem of drought. The harvest had been ruined, and there was a threat of famine. Many people in rural areas did not have access to clean drinking water. There was sufficient water in Tajikistan, but the infrastructure to allow it to be used rationally was lacking. In areas affected by the conflict, the irrigation and piping systems had been severely damaged. Improper irrigation techniques had led to erosion in some areas. The lack of clean drinking water had been responsible for the resurgence of a very large number of health problems which had completely disappeared during the Soviet era, including typhoid, anthrax and a number of intestinal disorders. In order to draw the attention of the international community to such problems, the Government was planning to hold an international conference in 2003 on water-related problems in Tajikistan.

37. Mr. RAJABOV (Tajikistan) said that a law on social partnership called for the participation of all sectors of society in addressing a number of issues. As the report under discussion had been the first State party report submitted by Tajikistan, NGO participation in the drafting process had not been extensive. However, Tajik NGOs had submitted an alternative report, which on many questions coincided with the information provided by the Government. The question of lowering the registration fees for NGOs had been the subject of much discussion with the organizations concerned and was currently being considered by the Ministry of Justice.

38. A presidential decree issued in December 1999 on the strengthening of democratization in the political life of the country had entrusted the Government with drawing up a State programme for education in the field of human rights. The working group of the Centre for Strategic Research had been established pursuant to that decree, and had already drawn up a draft State programme in cooperation with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The programme was due to be finalized and submitted for Government approval by 1 November 2000, and would be of prime importance in raising public awareness, in

particular among schoolchildren and students at the primary and secondary levels, of the basic provisions of human rights instruments. The decree also instructed all local executive bodies to set up public councils, with the participation of civil society, for the consideration of vital questions relating to democratization.

39. Concerning prospects for economic development, Tajikistan's independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union had coincided with a civil war which had led to heavy material losses. Since the end of the war, the economy had recovered somewhat. In the first half of 2000, industrial production and agricultural output had both increased by about nine per cent. It was hoped that the trend would continue, although a number of problems persisted. The entire economic structure had been based upon the single economy of the Soviet Union, the disintegration of which had led to many difficulties. With the support of regional and international financial institutions, a number of infrastructure projects were currently being carried out, including the construction of roads which would facilitate trade with China.

40. There were no children's courts. Juvenile cases were handled by the regular courts, which were, however, obliged under the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure to take the special characteristics of juvenile justice into consideration when hearing and investigating cases involving children. They must provide the child, from the moment of arrest, with a lawyer and must ensure access to the child for social workers, the parents and the lawyer. The Criminal Code set out more lenient criminal sentences for children. The maximum sentence, which was applied in cases of serious repeat offenders, was 10 years' imprisonment, and the death penalty could not be invoked against a minor.

41. Many Tajiks had been forced to seek refuge in other countries during the civil war. Most of those who had fled to Afghanistan or who had been internally displaced had since returned to their homes. To the extent possible and notwithstanding the enormous economic difficulties that it had faced, the Government had done whatever possible to ensure the best possible conditions of return, in particular by providing access to education, health and other social services.

42. There was a State law and a State programme for young people under the age of 14. Parliament was currently considering a number of child-related measures, including the possible ratification of the International Labour Organization Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1998 (No. 182) the State programme for education in the field of human rights and the draft budget for 2001, which included a section on support for children. The Board of Constitutional Guarantees of Citizens' Rights was responsible for ensuring that measures were taken by the Executive and the Government to ensure human rights, and that citizens whose rights had been violated could find some form of redress. For the time being, that body had only meagre resources, but it cooperated very closely with both national and international NGOs, especially for seminars and round tables. Apart from the Board, a parliamentary committee on human rights and the courts, there was no specific body such as an ombudsman's office which dealt exclusively with human rights.

43. The market economy had been introduced and accepted; however, the transitional period after the war had been a very difficult one. The consolidation of State security had become a major concern. Tajikistan shared a long frontier with Afghanistan, and had unfortunately had to

allocate much of its resources to defending that border owing to the tensions which had arisen between the two countries. The problems of extremism and trade in drugs had become serious threats not only for Tajikistan and Central Asia, but for countries further away as well.

44. Ms. SHARAPOVA said that unemployment and inflation were among the most serious economic and social problems currently facing the country. Another serious problem was family planning. The Government had drawn up a national family planning scheme and was reconsidering its reproductive health policy. The allocations to cover the economic, social and cultural rights of children were currently extremely inadequate. Benefits for children under 8 years of age were paid out to families which had an average income per capita of less than 1,000 rubles per month, or less than US$ 0.50. Birth allowances currently amounted to US$ 1.00 to US$ 1.50, and monthly allowances paid out until the child reached the age of 18 months amounted to US$ 0.50, or not even enough to cover the cost of a jar of baby food.

45. Ms. RILANTONO expressed the hope that the economic situation would improve in the near future. She drew the delegation's attention to the need for people providing services for children to be aware of the Convention. Had the Government undertaken to provide training in the Convention's provisions for such professionals, in particular those involved in the justice system? She asked whether, and to what extent, the tradition of forced marriages was still practised. Were schoolchildren given instruction in gender issues, and was there discrimination against women in higher education? She would also like to know whether the national plan of action for the period from 1998 to 2005 on the role of women incorporated provisions addressing the plight of children. What proportion of women in Tajikistan were illiterate, and how many were aware of the existence of the Convention?

46. Mr. RABAH noting that the Committee had not yet received written replies to the list of issues, asked the delegation to comment on a number of problems addressed by the alternative report submitted by Tajik NGOs. Schoolchildren were reportedly not encouraged or taught to express their opinions regarding problems of concern to them, and the only newspaper for schoolchildren had an extremely limited circulation. According to certain sources, the Government did not pay sufficient attention to the problem of domestic violence against children, and girls who were forced out of school were often at risk of sexual violence in public places. Drug abuse had reportedly become a serious problem as well.

47. Mr. DOEK asked whether the Government had any plans to lower the fees for registrating births. Registration was the first step in ensuring that a child's rights would be guaranteed. If the cost of registration was prohibitive, it was critical to reduce the fee. He asked whether the right to identity of children who were adopted or orphans was ensured. Were such children entitled to know the identities of their biological parents? Did mechanisms exist to ensure children's participation in the running of institutions such as schools? Lastly, there was reportedly a high level of violence in the country, owing in large part to the availability of weapons as a result of the civil war. Children were particularly vulnerable to public violence and ill-treatment. Had the Government taken any steps to combat such public violence?

48. Ms. MOKHUANE asked what steps were being taken to improve the precarious situation of girls, inasmuch as forced marriages still existed and girls were subjected to general

discrimination in all areas, especially in schools. Were there any programmes to combat the problem? On another matter what measures were in place to reduce the disparities between rural and urban areas?

49. Ms. EL GUINDI asked whether 10 was really the minimum age of imprisonment.

50. Ms. TIGERSTEDT-TÄHTELÄ asked about families' attitudes regarding the importance given to children's views. Was there any dialogue between children and their parents or were all decisions concerning children taken unilaterally by the parents? It was essential for children to be allowed to express their views, both collectively and individually - at school, within the family and in institutions - and to participate in local decision-making. That was an inalienable right whose enjoyment should not be tied to their economic situation.

51. Ms. KARP asked whether the age of adolescence ended at 17, as the delegation had stated, or at 19. If 17, were children of 17-18 given specific protection, as stipulated by the Convention? Considering the delegation's statement that Tajikistan had as yet no special coordination agency for child issues, what was the role, structure and budget of the various commissions for children in the different ministries? Did they work in unison?

52. As 25 per cent of the country's population was Uzbek-speaking, what steps were taken to disseminate the Convention to them? Also, since there was so specific child-related Bill on Parliament's agenda, did the delegation feel that the legislation had been adequately reviewed to bring it into line with the Convention? For example, had any attempt been made to amend the sex-abuse laws in a way that would prevent children from being victimized a second time when giving evidence? She had been concerned to learn that only one complaint of child sexual abuse had been lodged in 1991. What was being done to provide better protection for children in such situations?

53. She was aware that legislation was in place to protect young girls from early marriage and from the tradition of abduction for marriage, but what was actually being done to prevent those practices and to prosecute people for violating children's rights? She asked why the report made no mention of the State party's basic approach to the general principles of the Convention, without which children could not enjoy any of the other rights it contained. What say did children have in administrative decisions to remove them from their homes, and in the reprehensible practice of institutionalizing disabled children?

54. She asked whether there was any case law concerning the best interests of the child and how those interests were safeguarded in conflicts between children and parents, or between children and the institutions in which they were placed. What was society's basic perception of the best interests of the child, and how did that perception translate into reality? Lastly, did children born out of wedlock enjoy the same rights as those born to a married couple?

55. Mr. FULCI endorsed Mr. Doek's question concerning birth registration. One Tajik NGO had reported that parents in rural areas often failed to register their children, for a variety of reasons: ignorance of the law; difficult access to registration units; non-possession of the requisite documents and inability to pay the registration fee. He would recommend that the fee, which did not exist in most other countries, should be abolished.

56. The CHAIRPERSON requested information on the Tajik population's attitude to the Convention. Did it appreciate that children must be full-fledged bearers of rights? Given the large families in Tajikistan, how was a child's right to privacy of correspondence and telephone calls respected? Lastly, did any programmes exist to ensure a reasonable standard of economic life for children, in the wake of the civil war and severe drought?

57. Ms. SHARAPOVA (Tajikistan) said that no system was in place for training specialized juvenile-court judges, nor was there a particular group of professionals working with children exclusively on issues set forth in the Convention. It was also true that the children's newspaper referred to was published sporadically, mainly in the capital and larger cities, and in limited edition, so that children in rural areas depended for the most part on the audiovisual media.

58. Although the new Family Code stipulated that forced and early marriages were illegal, they did sometimes occur, especially in the hinterland and mainly for economic reasons. Since the preparation of the report - and, incidentally, the cessation of hostilities - abduction for purposes of marriage had diminished significantly. However, given the extremely precarious situation still prevailing in the country, parents sometimes gave a daughter in marriage to a suitable boy for her own security.

59. Regarding discrimination against women and girls, the 1999 decree on the role of women in society and the National Plan of Action for its implementation covered all gender issues. Women's representation in Parliament and Government had increased considerably in recent times; there were 17 women in senior Government posts and three women heads of local councils. More than half the country's NGOs (100 of which dealt with women's rights) were headed by women. Research centres on gender equality and sex education for girls and boys produced fact sheets and brochures on many gender issues. Some 80 per cent of girls completed the first grade of general education, but the percentage dropped sharply at the eighth or ninth grade for a variety of reasons: some girls married; others stayed to help with domestic chores and childcare in the home, especially if their mothers were forced to seek work in the cities; yet others simply could not afford school materials or even shoes.

60. A presidential quota had just been fixed, offering advantageous conditions and some 20 per cent of places in urban colleges for rural girls, and accommodation in student hostels so that their further education need not burden their families. NGO crisis centres advised girls and young women in distress occasioned by violence of any kind. One women's NGO had lately set up a social-worker training centre. While she could not supply statistics on female literacy, the fact that 60-70 per cent of teachers, doctors and other medical workers were women spoke for itself.

61. Replying to questions concerning children's expression of their views and the best interests of the child, she said that no specific psychological studies had been undertaken. Those issues were regulated by life in the society, which was, in turn, affected by growing rural migration and the widening gap between the rich, who possessed the means for travel and, hence, a broader outlook on life, and the poor, who could hardly afford newspapers. While women had the right to express their views and develop their interests and capacities, it was extremely difficult for them to do so in very large families, where the focus was on making ends meet. There was unlikely to be much improvement in the near future.

62. Turing to birth registration, she said many parents had no passport themselves, and therefore could not register their children. Affidavits and certificates were hard to come by, but measures were in place to improve the situation. While it did not constitute a major problem, funds were needed to address it. In fact the entire range of basic utilities and services were beyond the means of anyone on the minimum wage. From whatever angle one viewed the problem, Tajikistan simply did not have the necessary funds.

63. School democracy was at an embryonic stage. The situation had been improving prior to the dismantling of the Soviet Union and the civil war, but new problems had arisen. Democracy did exist in some schools in the capital, but not in rural schools. Child drug abuse was indeed a scourge, although the statistics did not reflect the real situation. Whereas Russia's greater affluence gave more adolescents the wherewithal to abuse drugs at school, in Tajikistan children were more likely to be dealers than consumers. Those who did take drugs were mostly children who left orphanages to seek work in the cities, and who were therefore lost to the authorities. It was true that a national plan of action was needed, but the new Drug Control Agency established in the Office of the President had made a great deal of headway.

64. Mr. RAJABOV (Tajikistan) said that all the necessary laws on torture and violence did exist in his country and would require hardly any amendment. The current focus needed to be on enforcement. In any event, child torture was not common in Tajik society, as the prevailing social attitude to children was one of respect.

65. Any civil war had ineluctable consequences. Not all the weapons borne in the recent troubles had been turned in, although the vast majority of former combatants had relinquished theirs. Apart from the forces of law and order, few people now carried weapons on the streets, which had been cleared of all military equipment. Demobilization had been conducted effectively and law and order had been restored.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.